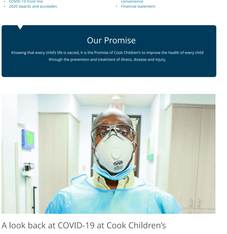
Cook Children's 2020 Annual Report



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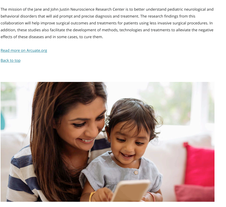
Our Promise

Knowing that every child's life is sacred, it is the Promise of Cook Children's to improve the health of every child through the prevention and treatment of illness, disease and injury.

A look back at COVID-19 at Cook Children's



In just a matter of months in early 2020, our lives changed in so many ways. While we each searched for how we would respond during this pivotal time in our history, one truth was universal for everyone at Cook Children's: We will continue to care for every child who needs us and is counting on us.

Although 2020 was a uniquely challenging time for all of us, there is still hope for our future. Not a day has passed during the pandemic where we haven't experienced, witnessed, or even thought of acts of incredible courage, kindness, commitment and resilience from our 8,000 employees. Those are the things that we have seen over and over again and continue to see through this crisis.

Our leadership team was thoughtful about how to support the entire organization in a way that everyone knows we have their backs. The main way we were able to show support was to ensure we paid everyone full pay through the pandemic, no matter what. For some, productivity went way down while others had to stay home for a period of time, but we continued to their full salaries. We did not have any layoffs or any reductions in force. I think that speaks to our culture, who we are, and how we work hard to take care of each other.

One thing we can always count on is the amazing support of our community members who continue to rally on behalf of our patients. On behalf of all the health care heroes at Cook Children's, I sincerely thank you for the outpouring of support and encouragement over the past year. We are humbled by your support of our doctors, nurses, health care professionals and administrators. From the valet to the researcher, to those providing community health services, there's one thing you can trust: They're all working together for the one child that matters most—yours.

Read more on Cook Children's Newsroom

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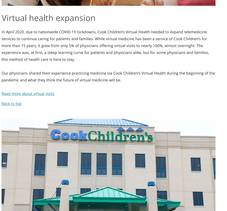

New frontiers for neurosciences research

In January 2020, Jane and John Justin Neurosciences Center at Cook Children's finalized a research relationship with the Department of Bioengineering at The University of Texas at Arlington. Funded by the Dodson Neuro Research Endowment, the Cook Children's Neuroscience Research Center added postdoctoral research fellows, Ph.D. students and interns from all over the world to work on multiple projects in epilepsy and movement disorders.

The mission of the Jane and John Justin Neuroscience Research Center is to better understand pediatric neurological and behavioral disorders that will all prompt and precise diagnosis and treatment. The research findings from this collaboration will help improve surgical outcomes and treatments for patients using less invasive surgical procedures. In addition, these studies also facilitate the development of methods, technologies and treatments to alleviate the negative effects of these diseases and in some cases, to cure them.

Read more on Arcuate.org

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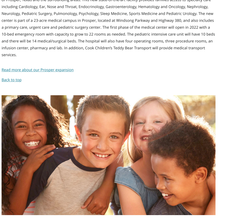

Virtual health expansion

In April 2020, due to nationwide COVID-19 lockdowns, Cook Children's Virtual Health needed to expand telemedicine services to continue caring for patients and families. While virtual medicine has been a service at Cook Children's for more than 15 years, it grew from only 5% of practices offering virtual visits to nearly 100%, almost overnight. The experience was, at first, a steep learning curve for patients and physicians alike, but for some physicians and families, this method of health care is here to stay.

Our physicians shared their experience practicing medicine via Cook Children's Virtual Health during the beginning of the pandemic and what they think the future of virtual medicine will be.

Read more about virtual visits

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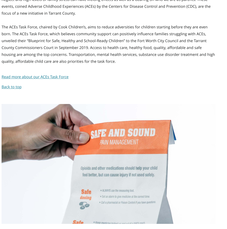

Cook Children's Pediatric Specialties - Prosper

In June 2020, Cook Children's opened a new specialty care and pediatric surgery center to serve the growing community of Prosper, Texas and the surrounding areas. This new state of the art facility provides families access to specialty care including Cardiology, Ear, Nose and Throat, Endocrinology, Gastroenterology, Hematology and Oncology, Nephrology, Neurology, Pediatric Surgery, Pulmonology, Psychology, Sleep Medicine, Sports Medicine and Pediatric Urology. The new center is part of a 23-acre medical campus in Prosper, located at Windsong Parkway and Highway 380, and also includes a primary care, urgent care and pediatric surgery center. The first phase of the medical center will open in 2022 with a 10-bed emergency room with capacity to grow to 22 rooms as needed. The pediatric intensive care unit will have 10 beds and there will be 14 medical/surgical beds. The center will also have four operating rooms, three procedure rooms, an infusion center, pharmacy and lab. In addition, Cook Children's Teddy Bear Transport will provide medical transport services.

Read more about our Prosper expansion

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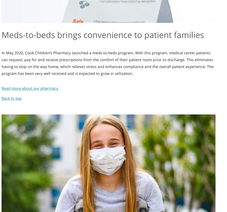

A blueprint for healthy children: New task force focused on adverse childhood experiences

When it comes to childhood, risk and experiences are left in the past. Some stay with us and impact our development mentally, physically and emotionally for years to come. Specifically, adversity and traumatic experiences like abuse, neglect and high levels of family stress can have lifelong effects as well as a bearing on who we are as parents. These events, coined Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), are the focus of a new initiative in Tarrant County.

The ACEs Task Force, chaired by Cook Children's, aims to reduce adversities for children starting before they are even born. The ACEs Task Force, which believes community support can positively influence families struggling with ACEs, joins the Arlington Chamber for Safe, Healthy and School-Ready Children's, the Fort Worth City Council and the Tarrant County Commissioners Court in the fall of Fiscal Year 2020 to address health care, healthy food, quality affordable and safe housing are among the top concerns. Transportation, mental health services, substance use disorder treatment and high quality, affordable child care also priorities for the task force.

Read more about our ACEs Task Force

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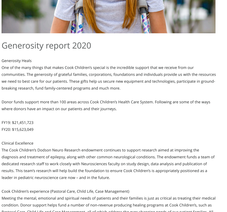

Meds-to-beds brings convenience to patient families

In May 2020, Cook Children's Pharmacy launched a meds-to-beds program. With this program, medical center patients can request, pay for and receive prescriptions from the comfort of their patient room prior to discharge. This eliminates having to stop on the way home, which relieves stress and enhances compliance and the overall patient experience. The program has been very well received and is expected to grow in utilization.

Read more about our pharmacy

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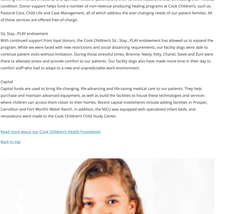

Generosity report 2020

Generosity Heals:
One of the many things that makes Cook Children's special is the incredible support that we receive from our communities. The generosity of grateful families, corporations, foundations and individuals provide us with the resources we need to best care for our patients. These gifts help us secure new equipment and technologies, participate in ground breaking research, fund family-centered programs and much more.

Donor funds support more than 100 areas across Cook Children's Health Care System. Following are some of the ways where donors have an impact on our patients and their journeys.

FYTD $21,651,723
FY20 $15,623,949

Clinical Excellence
The Cook Children's Dodson Neuro Research endowment continues to support research aimed at improving the diagnosis and treatment of epilepsy, along with other common neurological conditions. The endowment funds a team of dedicated research staff to work closely with Neurosciences faculty on study design, data analysis and publication of results. This team's research will help build the foundation to ensure Cook Children's is appropriately positioned as a leader in pediatric neuroscience care now – and in the future.

Cook Children's experience (Pastoral Care, Child Life, Case Management)
Meeting the mental, emotional and spiritual needs of patients and their families is just as critical as treating their medical condition. Donor support helps fund a number of non-revenue producing healing programs at Cook Children's, such as Pastoral Care, Child Life and Case Management, all of which address the ever-changing needs of our patient families. All of these services are offered free of charge.

Sit, Stay, PLAY endowment
With continued support from loyal donors, the Cook Children's Sit, Stay, PLAY endowment has allowed us to expand the program. While we were faced with new restrictions and social distancing requirements, our facility dogs were able to continue patient visits without limitation. During those stressful times, Brienne, Nesty, Kitty, Chanel, Steve and Zuri were there to alleviate stress and provide comfort to our patients. Our facility dogs also have made more time in their day to comfort staff who had to adapt to a new and unpredictable work environment.

Capital
Capital funds are used to bring life-changing, life-advancing and life-saving medical care to our patients. They help purchase and maintain advanced equipment, as well as build the facilities to house these technologies and services where children can access them closer to their homes. Recent capital investments include adding facilities in Prosper, Carrollton and Fort Worth's Walsh Ranch. In addition, the NICU was equipped with specialized infant beds, and renovations were made to the Cook Children's Child Study Center.

Read more about our Cook Children's Health Foundation

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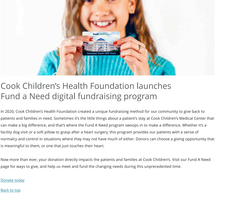

Cook Children's Health Foundation launches Fund a Need digital fundraising program

In 2020, Cook Children's Health Foundation created a unique fundraising method for our community to give back to patients and families in need. Sometimes it's the little things about a patient's stay at Cook Children's Medical Center that can make a big difference, and that's where the Fund a Need program swoops in to make a difference. Whether it's a facility dog visit or a soft pillow to grasp after a heart surgery, this program provides our patients with a sense of normalcy and control in situations where they may not have much of either. Donors can choose a giving opportunity that is meaningful to them, or one that just touches their heart.

Now more than ever, your donation directly impacts the patients and families at Cook Children's. Visit our Fund A Need page for ways to give, and help us meet and fund the changing needs during this unprecedented time.

Donate today

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Celebrating 20 years of employee generosity

For more than 20 years, it has been an honor to see and experience the incredible generosity of our employees. Their gifts, given in addition to their time and talents, support the patients and families we serve in many ways. From the medical center to our offices all over Texas, employee donations impact every patient and family member that trusts us with their care. In 2020, Employees Care raised a total of $919,479 ($72,987 more than 2018). This was the highest pledged total since the program began in 2000.

Employee support over the decades have provided more than $8,000,000 in funds for equipment, program enhancements, research and experiences that make a difference in the lives of the children and families we care for each and every day.

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Cook Children's Home Health makes face shields for those on the COVID-19 front line

Typically known for creating braces and helmets for young patients, the Orthotics and Prosthetics team at Cook Children's Home Health turned their talents to help doctors and nurses on the front line of the COVID-19 fight. Beginning in April 2020, our home health co-workers began making face shields to be used by clinical staff at Cook Children's who are caring for patients with COVID-19 symptoms. With the help of a high-powered 3-D printer, the team assembled over 300 shields by hand, which were distributed to doctors and nurses at the medical center. Since the shields are made entirely of plastic, they can be properly cleaned and re-used, eliminating the risk of running out. In addition to the production of face shields, Cook Children's Home Health has also provided employees and families with over 15,000 handmade cloth face masks.

Read more on Cook Children's Checkup Newsroom

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2020 awards and accolades

People often say that awards don't matter. But we think they do because they underscore our drive to always exceed the quality of care and service the families, patients and communities we serve expect from us. Throughout our continual change, rapid growth and more than 100 years of service, one thing remains constant — our Promise to improve the health of every child.

To live up to this Promise, we combine the art of caring with doctors and medical professionals who are committed to evidence-based practice, participating in leading clinical research and using the best available medicines and medical technology. It is our goal to ensure that we're doing all we can to provide safe, healthy communities where families can raise happy, healthy kids.

Our commitment to excellence is proven not only by awards, but also by the kinds of recognitions that earn these awards. Recognition that comes from our peers, the health care community and most of all, the patients, families and communities we're here to serve every day.

October 2019 – Cook Children's named a Talent Champion by the Fort Worth Chamber of Commerce.
October 2019 – Cook Children's achieved gold recognition by the American Heart Association's 2019 Workplace Health Achievement Index.
November 2019 – Chief Information Officer Theresa Meadows is a finalist in the 2020 Dallas CIO of the Year ORBIE Awards.
December 2019 – Cook Children's has 36 doctors recognized among the 2019 Texas Monthly magazine's list of Super Doctors.
February 2020 - For D Magazine's 2020 Excellence in Nursing Awards, Director of Nursing Research Mary Cazzell, Ph.D., RN, has been named to the list.
March 2020 – Fort Worth Business Press names pediatric anesthesiologist Michelle Craven Vinson, M.D., to the 2020 Forty Under Forty class.
May 2020 – Michelle Dozier, nurse manager, receives the Barbara A. Larson Humanitarian Award from Society of Pediatric Nurses.
June 2020 – Cook Children's Neurosciences team has made the U.S. News and World Report's Best Children's Hospitals List for an astounding 10th consecutive time.
July 2020 – Cook Children's life-saving extracorporeal membrane oxygenation has once again received Gold status from Extracorporeal Life Support Organization. This earned status is valid for three years.
July 2020 – Cook Children's has become the first free-standing pediatric hospital in the world to receive full accreditation in all five areas of evaluation from the Society for Simulation in Healthcare.
August 2020 – Fort Worth Inc., magazine lists the 400 most influential people in Fort Worth in its latest issue, which includes President and CEO of Cook Children's Health Care System Rick M. Merrill; President of Cook Children's Physician Network Britt Nelson, M.D.; Pediatrician Jason Terk, M.D.; Longtime Cook Children's Board Member Jerry Conatser.
September 2020 – Cook Children's Neonatal Intensive Care Institute is one of the first in Texas to receive its second level IV designation from the Texas Department of State Health Services.
September 2020 – CHILDREN AT RISK, a non-partisan advocacy group in Texas, has selected its Healthcare Heroes for 2020. We are proud to announce that Suzanne Whitworth, M.D, medical director of Infectious Diseases, has been chosen as the Fort Worth area winner.

View our awards and recognitions throughout the years

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Employees get moving at new Wellness Zone

At Cook Children's, we are passionate about health and fitness, and we care about our employees' well-being. Because of this, in Feb. 2020, we opened a Wellness Zone with the finest equipment, classes, educational support and personal exercise guidance to help employees achieve their wellness goals. Our engaging staff helps employees reach their personal best and have fun doing it.

In its first year, the Wellness Zone had 13,339 total visits by employees and hosted 592 classes with a total of 4,620 participants.

Read more about our benefits

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Happy 10th anniversary, Cook Children's Hyperinsulinism Center!

The genetic forms of hyperinsulinism (HI) affect only between 80 and 120 babies in the world each year. At the heart of Cook Children's Hyperinsulinism Center is Paul Thornton, M.D., a world-renowned expert on this rare disease, who is frequently called upon internationally to speak about this disease. Dr. Thornton is responsible for establishing not one, but two HI centers, the first prior to his time at Cook Children's.

Because of the foresight of Dr. Thornton more than 10 years ago, combined with an investigational new drug, our HI team has cured 96% of children with focal hyperinsulinism. Congrats to you, Dr. Thornton, and your entire collaborative team on 10 years of success!

Read more about our Hyperinsulinism Center

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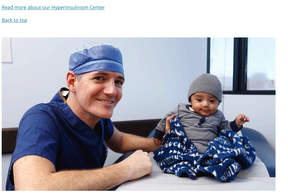

Cook Children's Congenital Adrenal Hyperplasia program is named a Center of Excellence

Cook Children's Congenital Adrenal Hyperplasia (CAH) program is proud to be one of eight Centers of Excellence in the nation designated by CARES Foundation. As a level 2 designated comprehensive care center, our multi-disciplinary team of health professionals provides endocrine, surgical, behavioral health, reproductive, genetic and nutrition services for our patients, as well as transition services to our adult partners for children with congenital adrenal hyperplasia from birth to adulthood. As an elite recipient of this award, we will continue to participate in the latest CAH research to help improve the lives of patients diagnosed with this condition.

Read more about this designation

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A clinical training program that puts us on the world stage

Cook Children's is now the first freestanding children's hospital in the world to receive full accreditation through the Society for Simulation in Healthcare (SSH), which aims to enhance the quality of health care through simulation education. Since 2009, Cook Children's has been working to bridge the gap between education and real-life clinical experience with its in-house simulation program. Of the 179 accredited simulation programs in various countries, Cook Children's is the first pediatric program to obtain this recognition in all five areas evaluated by SSH, which include core standards, assessment, teaching/education, systems integration and research.

"Any type of medical situation can be created in our sim lab, ranging from basic clinical skills to critical care situations like transporting a patient on extracorporeal membrane oxygenation," said Becky Southworth, MBA, BSN, RN, director of the Simulation Program at Cook Children's. "We can even intubate these simulators and put them on a ventilator. This has been especially helpful with COVID-19 because we can place a plexiglass guard around the simulator and allow staff to practice an intubation using the protective covering, which is what we are actually doing in real-life situations."

In fiscal year 2020, Cook Children's Simulation Program logged more than 11,000 visits and 26,000 hours of training. The program, which began with a single simulator, has grown vastly over the past 11 years and now encompasses 17 simulators, ranging from a 600 gram premature baby to a 150 pound teenager. The simulators can talk, cry, have seizures, turn blue, wiggle, blink and breathe.

Read more about our simulation program

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Cook Children's hires the first chief diversity officer

In August 2020, Cook Children's CEO Rick W. Merrill announced that Assistant Vice President of Public Relations Corporate Communications and Social Media Winifred King, was promoted to the newly created position of chief diversity o fficer.

As part of the health care system's executive leadership team, King now guides Cook Children's in building a more diverse organization, while furthering efforts of equity and inclusion. This promotion came after King's more than 13 years of service, in which time she played a pivotal role in establishing Cook Children's reputation nationally.

"It is hard to put into words what this decision and investment means to people of color and anyone who has ever felt different or excluded," said King. "For all of us who may have experienced inequities and mistreatment in our lifetimes, it is comforting to be a part of an organization that accepts our differences, our failures, and is willing to look inward and truly examine what is at the heart of our culture."

Read more about Winifred King

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Cook Children's Home Health celebrates 10th anniversary of Orthotics and Prosthetics

With the goal of providing the right care by the right person in the right setting, Cook Children's Home Health celebrated a decade of offering orthotics and prosthetics services. Our team is focused on making sure devices fit comfortably for our 3,500 to 5,000 new patients each year. All custom fabrications and modifications of devices are done on site, in our own fabrication lab, to increase quality and decrease wait time. This lab produces an average of 2,810 individual patient's devices each year. This is just another way we are able to keep the Cook Children's Promise in our communities.

Read more about orthotics and prosthetics

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Legal help for patient families

For some, legal issues can affect health and access to medical care. That's why Cook Children's and Texas A&M University School of Law came together to form a medical-legal partnership. Together we can help our patient families address legal needs, such as:

- Guardianship
- Housing
- Public benefits
- Veterans affairs
- Family law
- Immigration

Through this FREE program, an expert team is available to help families find answers, obtain direction and receive services for certain legal matters. The staff is skilled at helping parents access public benefits and handle other legal issues related to their child's health conditions.

Read more about legal help

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Our updated portal offers more convenience

In 2020, we updated our MyCookChildren's patient portal to allow families to spend less time managing their child's health care and more time with their children. As a free online resource for Cook Children's patient families, the portal connects directly to the child's confidential medical records, when and where it's most convenient.

MyCookChildren's is a transformation of our previous portal, MyChart, and offers new, easy-to-use features. The portal allows a parent to:

- Access their child's immunization records
- Review summaries from the child's primary and specialty care visits
- Receive test results
- Schedule and view upcoming appointments
- Arrange for virtual health visits from the comfort of home
- Confirm and update patient information before appointments, minimizing time in our office
- Have direct communication with the child's care team
- Handle medicine refill requests
- And much more!

Through this FREE program, an expert team is available to help families find answers, obtain direction and receive services for certain legal matters. The staff is skilled at helping parents access public benefits and handle other legal issues related to their child's health conditions.

To learn more or to create an account, visit mycookchildrens.org

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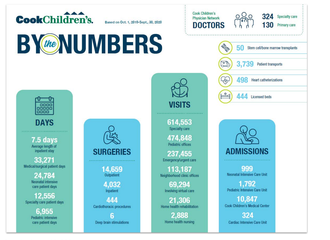
Our updated portal offers more convenience



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